40TH CONGRESS, 2d Session. SENATE. Ex. Doc. No. 50.

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MESSAGE

OF THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

COMMUNICATING,

In compliance with a resolution of the Senate of the 14th instant, information in relation to any application by any party for exclusive privileges in connection with hunting, trading, and the fisheries in Alaska.

APRIL 27, 1868.—Read, referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations, and ordered to be printed.

To the Senate of the United States:

In answer to the resolution of the Senate of the 14th of April, instant, calling for information relative to any application by any party for exclusive privileges in connection with hunting, trading, and the fisheries in Alaska, I transmit herewith the report of the Secretary of State on the subject, with its accompanying papers.

ANDREW JOHNSON.

WASHINGTON, *April* 18, 1868.

WASHINGTON, *April* 18, 1868.

The Secretary of State, to whom was referred the resolution of the Senate passed on the 14th of April, instant, to the effect that the President be requested to communicate to the Senate copies of any papers in the Department of State relating to any application by any party for exclusive privileges in connection with the hunting, trading, and the fisheries, in our recent purchase of territory from Russia, and whether any steps have been taken or acts done tending to the extension of any such exclusive privileges, or the sale of lands in said territory to private parties or companies, has the honor to report that the papers herewith submitted in schedule A, hereunto annexed, are all the papers in the Department of State which relate to the subject-matter of the resolution. The same papers contain, also, all the information which this department has concerning any steps which have been taken, or any acts done, of the character specified in the resolution.

Respectfully submitted.

WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

The PRESIDENT.

SCHEDULE A.

No. 1. Memorial of the legislature of Washington Territory to the President. Received February, 1866.

No. 2. Captain Harris to Mr. Seward. April 21, 1867.

No. 3. Mr. Welles to Mr. Seward, with an accompaniment. May 22, 1867.
No. 4. Mr. Chappell to Mr. Seward. May 30, 1867.
No. 5. Mr. F. W. Seward to Mr. Chappell. June 6, 1867.
No. 6. Mr. Browning to Mr. Seward, with an accompaniment. October 26, 1867.
No. 7. Mr. Seward to M. de Stoeckl, with an accompaniment. October 29, 1867.
No. 8. General Grant to Mr. Seward, with accompaniments. October 29, 1867.
No. 9. General Halleck to the Adjutant General. November 23, 1867.
No. 10. General Grant to the Secretary of the Interior, with an accompaniment. December 21, 1867.
No. 11. Mr. Wicker to Mr. Seward, with an accompaniment. January 10, 1868.
No. 12. Senate resolution 116. February 28, 1868.
No. 13. Senator Cole to Mr. Browning. April 13, 1868.

No. 1.

Memorial of the legislature of Washington Territory to the President. Received February, 1866.

His Excellency ANDREW JOHNSON,
President of the United States:

Your memorialists, the legislative assembly of Washington Territory, beg leave to show that abundance of codfish, halibut, and salmon, of excellent quality, have been found along the shores of the Russian possessions. Your memorialists respectfully request your excellency to obtain such rights and privileges of the government of Russia as will enable our fishing vessels to visit the ports and harbors of its possessions to the end that fuel, water, and provisions may be easily obtained, that our sick and disabled fishermen may obtain sanitary assistance, together with the privilege of curing fish and repairing vessels in need of repairs. Your memorialists further request that the Treasury Department be instructed to forward to the collector of customs of this Puget Sound district such fishing licenses, abstract journals, and log-books, as will enable our hardy fishermen to obtain the bounties now provided and paid to the fishermen in the Atlantic States. Your memorialists finally pray your excellency to employ such ships as may be spared from the Pacific naval fleet in exploring and surveying the fishing banks known to navigators to exist along the Pacific coast from the Cortez bank to Behring straits. And, as in duty bound, your memorialists will every pray.

Passed the house of representatives January 10, 1866.

EDWARD ELDRIDGE,
Speaker House of Representatives.

Passed the council January 13, 1866.

HARVEY K. HINES,
President of the Council.

No. 2.

Captain Harris to Mr. Seward.

PHILADELPHIA, *April* 21, 1867.

SIR: Having formed an organization to go to Russian America with the intention of settling and making permanent homes for the citizens of the States, we

as such desire to write to you to see what arrangements could be effected between the government and the parties which are anxious to emigrate to that country.

Having called a meeting of citizens of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to that effect, we are waiting to hear from the government in regard to emigration, and the welfare of such emigrants. Having been elected chairman of the committee, they have prevailed upon me to inform you of our proceedings.

Resolved, That we, members of the pioneer association for the civilization of the lately acquired Russian American territory, (now America,) ask the honorable Secretary of State for his good offices in the furtherance of this object.

Resolved, That we pledge ourselves to equip ourselves for the above object, and rely on the United States government to assist us in the objects of its civilizing influences.

Resolved, That having entire reliance in the patriotism of the government of the United States, we ask an early reply to this communication.

Captain NATHANIEL R. HARRIS, *Chairman*.
CALVIN CURTIS, *Secretary*.

Committee—
E. COLLINS,
C. MYERS,
JOHN LEDDY.

All communications to be addressed to Captain N. R. Harris, 1002 Wharton street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD,
Secretary of State, Washington, D. C.

No. 3.

Mr. Welles to Mr. Seward.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
Washington, May 22, 1867.

SIR: In accordance with your verbal request, I enclose herewith a copy of a letter from Mr. I. S. McDonald, in relation to the recent acquisition of Russian America.

Very respectfully,

GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy.

Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD,
Secretary of State, Washington, D. C.

Mr. McDonald to Mr. Welles.

STEILACOOM, PIERCE COUNTY, WASHINGTON TERRITORY,
April 12, 1867.

HONORED SIR: Some 15 months ago our territorial legislature passed a memorial to his Excellency the President of the United States, soliciting his good offices with the government of Russia for certain rights in the Russian American waters, which has resulted in the acquisition of that beautiful rich country, the purchase of which would be a good bargain at $100,000,000.

The memorial further asks his Excellency to employ some of the naval fleet

in surveying the fishing banks on our coast from the Cortez bank to Behring's straits.

I desire to ask you for such information as will enlighten us on this all-important subject. The facilities on Puget sound for furnishing shelter, water, coal of the best quality at $5 per ton, oak timber, and every needed element in the construction and repair of ships, should appeal in earnest to our government, and orders should be issued to the admiral of this station at once to rendezvous a portion of his fleet on the sound.

The acquisition of Russian America, with its hordes of savages, should be an additional incentive to such orders forthwith.

I have located a claim inside of "Ketron island," some three miles above this place, which I have offered to Admiral Thatcher for a dry dock and naval arsenal. The above claim is well supplied with water power for any purpose, plenty of stately firs for spars and planking, with choice pasture oaks fit for every purpose of ship repairing and building. Good granite rock abounds on the claim, and I am informed that excellent soft coal-beds are to be found below the surface, but of this I will inform myself better soon.

I solicit your opinion at your earliest convenience.

Yours, very sincerely,

I. S. McDONALD.

Hon. G. WELLES,
Secretary of the United States Navy,
Washington City, D. C.

I am the father, prompter, and writer of the territorial memorial above referred to, and hope, in this my 48th year, to receive the approbation of my country.—*Ibid.*

P. S.—Our late delegate to Congress, Hon. A. I. Denny, arrived home yesterday; consequently we have no delegate at your government at present, but hope to send you soon a man of commercial experience.

I. S. McD.

No. 4.

Mr. Chappell to Mr. Seward.

NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT, *May* 30, 1867.

DEAR SIR: I have to own receipt of your esteemed favor of the 25th instant, and thank you for the information conveyed, and a map of the territory of Russia lately ceded to the United States, so kindly forwarded.

I desire to send a master, by next California steamer, to Sandwich islands to take charge of one of my vessels there, and proceed from thence, about the 25th of July next, to the Aleutian islands, for the purpose of trading, sealing, fishing, &c.

I beg leave to inquire if I should be fully warranted in doing this. Also, if the Department of State would grant to me a letter which would justify the master of such a vessel in the lawful prosecution of his voyage, in case he should meet any of the inhabitants of said islands.

An early reply would much oblige, very respectfully, yours,

RICHARD H. CHAPPELL.

Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD,
Secretary of State, Washington.

No. 5.

Mr. F. W. Seward to Mr. Chappell.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, June 6, 1867.

SIR: I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 30th ultimo, and to state, in reply, that it is not deemed expedient at this time to give such a letter as you desire. It may be proper, however, to inform you that authority has been granted to the collector of customs at San Francisco to clear vessels from that port to Sitka, in Russia America, under certified manifests countersigned by the Russian consul, domestic goods not taxable, and other foreign and domestic goods on which all duties and taxes have been paid, but no others, and no arms, ammunition or ardent spirits. No other shipment to Sitka, nor any shipments of merchandise to any other parts or places in Russian America, can be authorized in the present transition stage of the territory. It is presumed that when the formal transfer of the territory and public property shall have been fully accomplished the Treasury Department will develop, as rapidly as the public interest may require, facilities for trade and the prosecution of the fisheries, and will duly promulgate through the press all proper information on the subject.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

F. W. SEWARD,
Acting Secretary.

No. 6.

Mr. Browning to Mr. Seward.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, D. C., October 26, 1867.

SIR: In reply to your communication of the 24th instant in relation to attempts of American citizens to acquire pre-emption rights to lands at Sitka, in the newly acquired Territory of Alaska, I have the honor to enclose for your information a copy of a report this day made to me by the Commissioner of the General Land Office upon the subject of your inquiries. Such claims and settlements are not only without the sanction of law, but are in direct violation of the provisions of the laws of Congress applicable to public domain secured to the United States by any treaty made with a foreign nation; and, if deemed necessary and advisable, military force may be used to remove the intruders.

This department has no officers at Sitka, nor in any other part of the "Russian purchase," and must rely upon the State Department to cause the necessary orders in the premises to be communicated to our authorities there.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

O. H. BROWNING, *Secretary.*

Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD,
Secretary of State.

Mr. Wilson to Mr. Browning.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
General Land Office, October 26, 1867.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the department letter of yesterday, enclosing a communication of the 24th from the honorable Secretary

of State, by which the department is advised that citizens of the United States are attempting to make claims and settlements at Sitka within the "Russian purchase" under the town site and pre-emption laws, and I have the honor to state that such settlements are illegal and contrary to law. (See act of March 3, 1807, vol. 2, page 445, United States Statutes.)

In the absence of specific legislation by Congress providing for the organization of land districts within the "Russian purchase," and the extension of our system of surveys over the same, settlements and claims under the town site and pre-emption laws are unlawful, and cannot be recognized under existing laws.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOSEPH S. WILSON,
Commissioner.

Hon. O. H. BROWNING,
Secretary of the Interior.

No. 7.

Mr. Seward to Mr. de Stoeckl.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, October 29, 1867.

SIR: I have the honor to enclose for your information a copy of a letter of yesterday to General Grant, the Secretary of War *ad interim*, embodying an instruction which the President has directed to be sent by telegraph to Major General Halleck, by him to be promptly communicated to Major General Rousseau, at Sitka, with a view to preventing premature and illegal attempts to occupy land in Alaska.

Accept, sir, a renewed assurance of my very high consideration.

WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

Mr. EDWARD DE STOECKL, *&c., &c., &c.*

Mr. Seward to General Grant.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, October 28, 1867.

GENERAL: In the absence of specific legislation by Congress for the organization of land districts in Alaska, claims of pre-emption and settlements are not only without the sanction of law, but are in direct violation of laws applicable to the public domain. Military force may be used to remove intruders if necessary. Will you have the goodness to instruct Major General Halleck to this effect by telegraph, and request him to communicate the instruction to Major General Rousseau at Sitka?

I have the honor to be, general, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

General U. S. GRANT,
Secretary of War ad interim.

No. 8.

General Grant to Mr. Seward.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, October 29, 1867.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 28th instant, in relation to claims of pre-emption and settlement in Alaska, and to enclose herewith for your information copies of the telegram and letter of instructions to General Halleck on the subject.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

U. S. GRANT,
Secretary of War ad interim.

Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD,
Secretary of State.

WAR DEPARTMENT, ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, October 29, 1867.

SIR: I am directed by the Secretary of War *ad interim* to forward to you the enclosed copy of a letter from the Department of State, on the 28th instant, in regard to claims of pre-emption and settlements in Alaska, and to direct that you give instructions in accordance with the views therein contained.

I also enclose a copy of a telegram sent you this day.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. D. TOWNSEND,
Assistant Adjutant General.

Major General H. W. HALLECK, U. S. A.,
Commanding Military Division of the Pacific,
San Francisco, California.

Official:

E. D. TOWNSEND,
Assistant Adjutant General.

WAR DEPARTMENT, ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, October 29, 1867.

Major General H. W. HALLECK, U. S. A.,
Commanding Military Division of the Pacific, San Francisco, California:

Claims of pre-emption and settlements in Alaska are as yet in violation of law. Instruct General Rousseau at Sitka to prevent them.

By order of the Secretary of War:

E. D. TOWNSEND,
Assistant Adjutant General.

Official copy of telegram:

E. D. TOWNSEND,
Assistant Adjutant General.

No. 9.

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION OF THE PACIFIC,
San Francisco, California, November 23, 1867.

GENERAL: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of October 29, transmitting a letter of the previous day from the Secretary of State in regard to claims of pre-emption in Alaska; also your telegram of October 29, on same subject.

Since General Rousseau left here, October 25, there has been no means of communicating with Sitka. It is presumed that the general is by this time in Portland, Oregon.

I will give the proper instructions to General Davis, who now commands in Alaska, by the earliest opportunity. It is doubtful, however, whether there will be any further communication with Sitka before next spring.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. W. HALLECK,
Major General United States Army,
Commanding Military Division of the Pacific.

ADJUTANT GENERAL OF THE ARMY,
Washington, D. C.

Official:

———— ————,
Assistant Adjutant General.

No. 10.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, December 21, 1867.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of a communication from Major General Halleck, commanding the military division of the Pacific, concerning the peninsula of Kenay, in the newly acquired territory of Alaska, and to request that his suggestion, "that these lands be surveyed and brought into market at as early a period as possible," be carried out.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

U. S. GRANT,
Secretary of War ad interim.

HON. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

Official:

R. WILLIAMS,
Assistant Adjutant General.

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION OF THE PACIFIC,
San Francisco, California, November 19, 1867.

GENERAL: It is understood that the best agricultural land in the newly acquired territory of Alaska is to be found on the peninsula of Kenay, between Cook's inlet and Prince William's sound. The climate is said to be far better than at Sitka or Kodiak. It is proposed to establish a military post on this peninsula early next spring, and no doubt settlers will follow as soon as they are certain of protection.

I therefore respectfully suggest to the Department of the Interior that these lands be surveyed and brought into market at as early a period as possible.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. W. HALLECK,
Major General United States Army,
Commanding Military Division of the Pacific.

ADJUTANT GENERAL OF THE ARMY,
Washington, D. C.

Official:

R. WILLIAMS,
Assistant Adjutant General.

No. 11.

Mr. Wicker to Mr. Seward.

LOCKPORT, N. Y., *January* 10, 1868.

DEAR SIR: I have the honor to submit herewith an article on "St. Paul's island," territory of Alaska, and would most respectfully invite your attention to the same.

The facts therein contained were gathered while visiting the island in November, 1866. Hoping they may be of service to the government and received in the spirit which actuates me forwarding the same,

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

FRANK N. WICKER,
Late Chief of Land Service Russian American Telegraph Expedition.

Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD,
Secretary of State, Washington, D. C.

ST. PAUL'S ISLAND.

The above-named island is situated in Behring sea, north of and about three days' sail from Ounimok Pass, in the Aleutian or Fox islands. It is between fifty and sixty miles in length, with a breadth of from one to five miles, and is without doubt the most valuable point in the recent acquisition.

The Russian American Fur Company have maintained a post and settlement there for years, employing the native Aleutian islanders in killing the fur seal and curing the skins. These animals literally cover the island. The surface of island in the vicinity of the settlement is dish-shaped in appearance, and the outer rim from the summit to the water's edge is so completely covered with the fur seal, that when landing one naturally stops and surveys with wonder and amazement this numberless congregation of living animals; as you move forward they open right and left, reminding one very much of a large flock of sheep in a very small field. They vary in size from small pups of fifty pounds to old sea lions of two tons. Those weighing about two hundred pounds are selected for their fur. The Russian Company have realized over and above expenses $100,000 annually for years, for the skins alone, and although each seal will yield from one to three gallons of oil, it has been allowed to go to waste on account of their failing to furnish fry works of sufficient capacity.

The method of killing the seal is quite novel. Fifteen or twenty natives, armed with clubs or bats from six to eight feet in length, will surround a drove of several thousand, drive them inland to a convenient point, when the work of destruction begins. A light blow on the tip of the nose is sufficient, and as the animals huddle together as if for mutual protection, those of the desired shade and color are easily selected and despatched.

The ground being covered with dead seal, the balance are driven further on, when operations commence as before, care being taken to kill the males only, as it has been recently ascertained that by so doing the animals would remain constantly on the island, and their number rapidly increase.

The company have furnished 75,000 skins annually, in accordance with a standing con-

tract for that number, without any apparent decrease; and when we take into consideration the fact that one male seal is sufficient for three hundred females, and that the company furnish the 75,000 from the former without any apparent diminishment of their numbers, we have a faint idea of the wealth contained on the island.

It will thus be seen that, with proper management, the island should be made to yield a handsome revenue to the government. Strict regulations, similar to those adopted by the Russians, should be enforced, thereby preventing an indiscriminate slaughter of those valuable animals. Unless this is done, speculators, whalers, and others anxious to amass a fortune in the shortest possible time, will take possession and ruin in one year a business which should be made permanent and profitable for years to come.

The climate is mild considering the latitude, 57° north, and cattle and poultry are raised and kept on the island without difficulty.

The only walrus skeleton in the United States (now at the Smithsonian Institute) was taken by the natives near this island.

Respectfully submitted.

FRANK N. WICKER,
Late Chief of Land Service Russian American Telegraph Expedition.

LOCKPORT, N. Y., *January*, 1868.

No. 12.

[Received under Senator Cole's frank, March 2, 1868.]

FORTIETH CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION—S. R. 116.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,
February 28, 1868.

Mr. Cole asked, and by unanimous consent obtained, leave to bring in the following joint resolution; which was read twice, referred to the Committee on Public Lands, and ordered to be printed:

JOINT RESOLUTION relating to the islands of Saint Paul and Saint George.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the California-Russia Fur Company, successors to the Russian-American Fur Company, shall have the possession, use, and control, for a period of thirty years, of Saint George's and Saint Paul's islands, (situated about fifty-seven degrees north latitude, and about one hundred and seventy degrees west longitude from Greenwich,) to the extent necessary for the propagation and protection of fur-bearing sea animals resorting to said islands, and as fully as the same have heretofore been exercised and enjoyed by the Russian-American Fur Company.

No. 13.

Senator Cole to Mr. Browning.

SENATE UNITED STATES,
April 13, 1868.

SIR: I have by telegraph from San Francisco an intimation that certain parties in the Atlantic States are trying to obtain fishing, hunting, and trading privileges in Alaska, to the prejudice of certain persons on the Pacific coast.

This I hope may not be encouraged.

Respectfully,

C. COLE.

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

[Indorsement on the back of the above.]

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.

Received April 14, 1868—dated April 13, 1868—from Hon. C. Cole, United States senate.

Subject—Requests that no privileges to hunt, fish, or trade in Alaska be given, to the detriment of persons on the Pacific coast.

Action—Respectfully referred to the honorable Secretary of State, and the writer so informed.

By order of the Secretary:

JOHN C. COX, *Chief Clerk.*